

**JAHVH**  
*Tampa, Florida*

# FORUM

## VA Nursing Homes *a 'Home with a Heart'*



**JA  
HVA**  
*Tampa*  
James A. Haley Veterans'  
Hospital & Clinics





# From the Director



Dear Fellow Employees, Volunteers, Veterans, and Friends of JAHVH,

Nursing Home care is changing in dramatic ways throughout the health care industry. And no where is it more apparent than at the Tampa VA's Nursing Home Care Unit (NHCU) where the needs of our most senior veterans are met with innovative programs tailored specifically for them. The goal, of course, is to restore or improve veterans' health, help them maintain their independence, and provide them with end-of-life support services, if needed.

Did you know that most veterans come to the NHCU for rehabilitation and then return to their homes? And I'll bet you weren't aware that at the NHCU's novel Geriatric Outpatient Clinic, all treatment team members come directly to the patient's room for their appointments. This is "One Stop Shopping" at its best for our aging vets with special needs. And the many unique programs and special events happening at the Nursing Home each and every day make life, well, pretty darn fun for our residents. Be sure to take a few minutes to read all about them in this issue of the JAHVH FORUM. I think you'll be surprised at what you didn't know about the Tampa VA's Nursing Home — the "Home with a Heart."

Also featured in this issue is an article on a VA interdisciplinary team of Primary Care professionals who developed a model for treating patients with chronic pain. The model was one of 10 national winners of the VA's 2005 Office of Nursing Services Innovations Award.

And you won't want to miss the stories on the JAHVH Gold Star program to recognize employees who go above and beyond to give excellent customer service and My *HealthVet*, a secure VA Web Site that provides a gateway to veteran health benefits and services, including filling prescriptions on-line. Enjoy!!

Forest Farley, Jr.  
Director, James A. Haley Veterans Hospital & Clinics



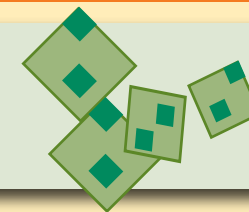
## DIRECTOR RECEIVES VETERANS' BRAINTRUST AWARD

Hospital Director Forest Farley, Jr. was recognized September 8, 2006 for his service and support of America's veterans during a Veterans' Braintrust Awards reception in Washington D.C. The event was held in conjunction with the annual Congressional Black Caucus legislative conference.

Mr. Farley attended the conference and accepted his award at the invitation of Congresswoman Corrine Brown, FL-Dist 3 (right). Congressman Sanford Bishop, Jr., GA-Dist 2, also participated in Mr. Farley's nomination, and Rep. Brown plus staff of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, attended the awards ceremony.

# Performance Excellence

[www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/](http://www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/)



## Tampa VA Team Develops National Model for Managing Chronic Pain

"John" is a 65-year-old Vietnam veteran with lower back pain that just never seems to go away. When he meets with his Primary Care doctor at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (JAHVH) in Tampa, he describes himself as "weary and depressed" because of the chronic "throbbing" pain in his back that hasn't responded to any of the treatments he's had so far including therapy, injections and chiropractic care.

"John" may be a good candidate for a model program developed by an interdisciplinary team of Primary Care professionals at JAHVH for treating patients with chronic pain. The model, which was developed using existing staff, is called "Primary Care Chronic Pain Opioid Case Management." It was one of 10 national winners of the VA's 2005 Office of Nursing Services Innovations Award.

"Veterans with chronic pain love this program. Before, they had to come to the hospital for monthly appointments to be evaluated. They had to make trips here to see their doctor to get their prescription renewed—and their doctors were not always available. And they also had to wait in line at the Pharmacy for prescriptions. All of that adds to the stress of a chronic pain patient, and it's all gone now," said Dr. Patricia Mossop, M.D., a JAHVH Primary Care physician and Opioid team member.



In the model, stable patients with chronic pain who are receiving long term therapy with opioids (narcotics) are assigned a Registered Nurse Case Manager who coordinates their care. New policies and streamlined procedures developed by the Primary Care team of doctors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and registered nurses allow for careful supervision of the veteran's care and medications through scheduled correspondence and phone calls. Because care is managed at home, the team estimates about 2,700 visits by the veteran to the VA hospital a year are eliminated for return appointments. The result is effective management of the patient's chronic pain while allowing more access to veterans waiting for appointments.

Patients must also complete a monthly report that lets the Nurse Case Manager know if the treatment is effective and, because narcotics can be abused, veterans must agree to take periodic urine and/or blood tests to check drug levels in their bodies. "Opioid addiction in chronic pain patients is extremely rare," said Dr. Mossop.

More than 500 patients are currently in the program, according to Florence Graniero, RN Case Manager. At JAHVH, they range in age from their 20s to their upper 90s. "We see some very young people with chronic pain caused by severe combat-related injuries," she said.

Many patients with chronic lower back, arthritis and myofascial ("all over") pain respond well to opioids, but there are side effects that make them less desirable like constipation, nausea and drowsiness. "Not everyone can take them. But for those who can, they can make all the difference in the world in their quality of life," Graniero said.

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Visit our public Web site  
and read the JAHVH FORUM  
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[www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/](http://www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/)

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Veterans and caregivers at  
the JAHVH Nursing Home  
Care unit spend quality  
time together at the  
Tampa facility known  
for its innovative inpatient  
and alternative programs.

[www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/](http://www1.va.gov/visn8/tampa/)



# Congressional VISIT

# My HealthVet

## HELPING VETERANS MANAGE THEIR HEALTH

It's filling my prescriptions.

*My HealthVet*

It's tracking **my** blood pressure.  
It's monitoring **my** blood sugar.  
It's logging **my** heart rate.  
It's recording **my** immunizations.  
It's watching **my** cholesterol.  
It's keeping track of **my** vitamins.  
It's watching **my** diet.  
It's tracking **my** exercise and activities.  
It's recording **my** military health history.

It's My HealthVet  
([www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov))

My HealthVet (MHV) is a secure VA Web Site that provides a gateway to veteran health benefits and services. MHV is a powerful tool to help veterans better understand and manage their health. The software allows access to trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits, the Personal Health Journal, and now, online VA prescription refills. In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view medical appointments, copay balances, and key in portions of their VA medical records online, plus much more!

My HealthVet also provides a portal to on-line electronic patient education sponsored by the VA. It helps increase awareness of important health education to veterans related to disease process, symptoms and treatments. Information on these topics as well as other practical, user friendly educational materials is available for patients and staff through the MHV portal. An educated patient is more likely to participate and follow through with his/her healthcare plan.

Currently, of the nation's 24.1 million veterans, there are more than 238,123 registered users in My HealthVet with over 869,231 prescription refills processed since August of 2005 when the program started.



## Vets Registered in MHV Can Refill Prescriptions On Line

To get started, veterans should register by accessing the MHV web site at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov). Important! Only registered veterans who have checked "VA Patient" when registering can refill prescriptions. To use this service, select the Pharmacy tab in the main menu bar. Then click the RxRefill tab in the submenu just below the main menu bar and follow the directions.

In addition, the **Personal Health Journal** provides valuable features for managing and tracking veterans:

- **Personal Information** – Helps keep track of your:
  - o Contact information
  - o Emergency contacts
  - o Health care providers
  - o Treatment locations
  - o Health insurance information
- **Military Health History** – Record important events from your military service, exposures you think you may have experienced, and assignments related to your health history.
- **Medications, over-the-counter drugs, herbals and supplements** – Record the name, starting and ending date, prescription number, and dosage.
- **Allergies** – Keep track of your allergies by date, severity, reaction, diagnosis, and comments.
- **Tests** – Keep track of your tests by test name, date of test, location test was performed, provider's name, results, and any comments.
- **Medical Events** – Keep track of illnesses, accidents or other events by logging their date, treatment prescribed or comments regarding the event.
- **Immunizations** – Record the immunization, date received, method used, and any reactions you might have.
- **HealthLogs** – Track your readings for these many health aspects:
  - o Blood pressure
  - o Blood sugar
  - o Cholesterol
  - o Body temperature
  - o Body weight
  - o Heart rate
  - o Pain

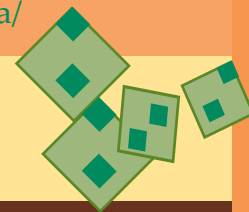
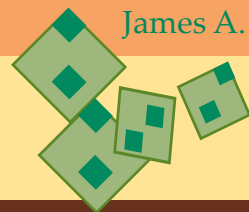


**C**ongressman Mike Bilirakis (R-FL) and staff of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, visited JAHVH and met with hospital and VISN 8 leaders and staff August 29-30th. The purpose of the visit was to see first hand how the Tampa VA hospital cares for veterans.

**D**uring their visit, the Congressman and a distinguished panel of Veteran Service Organization representatives received a comprehensive hospital tour and enjoyed a delicious lunch hosted by Hospital Director Forest Farley, Jr. Congressman Bilirakis and Rep. Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL 5) also co-hosted an afternoon Veterans' FORUM with informative presentations by hospital and other VA staff on a variety of topics from claims processing and facility improvements to nursing issues, veterans' privacy and security, Polytrauma, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Also during the event, Congressman Bilirakis recognized outstanding Tampa VA employees whose names were subsequently entered into the Congressional Record during a speech he made in the U.S. House of Representatives Sept. 12th. During his speech, the Congressman recognized the JAHVH employees, describing them as going "above and beyond" to serve the men and women who "bravely wore our nation's military uniform." They are as follows:

- **Virginia Osmar**, Employee of the 1st Qtr, Port Richey Outpatient Clinic (OPC)
- **Evelyn Gines-Dasilva**, Employee of the 2nd Qtr, Port Richey OPC
- **Geraldine Penia**, Hospital Ambassador (Clinical), 1st Qtr
- **Michele Overland**, Hospital Ambassador (Administrative), 1st Qtr
- **Douglas Covey**, Hospital Ambassador (Clinical), 2nd Qtr
- **(Officer) Jerome Sipes**, Hospital Ambassador (Administrative), 2nd Qtr
- **Charles Gutierrez**, Hospital Ambassador (Clinical), 3rd Qtr
- **Ruthe Hunter**, Hospital Ambassador (Administrative), 3rd Qtr
- **Nenita Auza**, Hospital Ambassador (Clinical), 4th Qtr





# Patient OUTLOOK



## VA Mail CALL

### A Couple in Crisis:

*Something just doesn't seem right. What's going on with me? What should I do? What do you do when you know you need medical help? Those were questions asked by veteran Bob and his wife, Edie. Their answer: Go to the VA for help.*

Things started going downhill for Bob back in 2003. He was having problems, but didn't think it was all that bad. He felt his driving was just fine--his wife didn't totally agree with him. She was very concerned and insisted on doing the driving. Discussions continued at home and everything seemed okay until Dec. 1st of that year when Bob had a serious car accident. A few weeks later, he came to JAHVH for followup. It was then that Bob's Primary Care provider agreed that something was wrong. He ordered tests and consultations to specialists, and instructed Bob not to drive.

Time went on, there were more tests, and more visits to the Tampa VA Hospital. Edie commented, "All these symptoms are changing Bob. I feel our life, as we have known it for 47 years, is slipping away". Bob had CTs, MRIs, EMGs, and many other tests. After exhausting all treatment options at JAHVH, Edie asked Neurology some questions about research she knew of and Bob was referred to Vanderbilt University Medical Center, in Nashville, Tenn. for further evaluation. In March 2006, he was diagnosed with Multiple System Atrophy and returned to the care of the Tampa VA. Multiple System Atrophy is a degenerative disorder with progressive damage to the nervous system.

Was there anything more that could be done? The Admin Assistant in Neurology got to know Bob and Edie quite well. She knew the wife of another veteran who was also dealing with similar symptoms. With her help, the wives are now in touch with each other via e-mail and have developed a friendship and support for each other. The other veteran with the same condition was being treated at the

Gainesville VA hospital. Bob and Edie asked about that program, and were referred, again by Neurology, in April 2006, to the Gainesville VA Medical Center. There Bob went through another long evaluation and the diagnosis changed to Progressive Supranuclear Palsy, a rare, neurodegenerative disease with no known cure.

Things haven't improved with this diagnosis—it's a progressive condition. Bob and Edie now say, "Thank God, Thank God, we have peace of mind in knowing what we are dealing with. Every day brings about changes. We can deal with the changes with faith and hope. We are so thankful for the VA care provided and that the Tampa VA recognized that we needed help. We are also thankful for being referred to as the Vanderbilt and Gainesville's VA".

The future? Days are filled with challenges, changes, research, and more questions. Bob and Edie hope to learn more, and to be able to help others facing similar challenges. They say, "We are thankful for strength, peace, each other, and of course, the VA."



JAHVH Patient Advocates

#### Patient Advocates' Note:

Bob and Edie would like to personally thank the following healthcare professionals for Bob's care:

From the Tampa VA: Dr. Thompson Matthews, Primary Care, Foxtrot Team; Dr. Charles Brock, Neurology; Dr. Juan Sanchez-Ramos, Neurology, Movement Disorder Clinic; Melinda Anello, Administrative Assistant, Neurology; Patty Krauter, Jo Leonard and Keith Ziegler, Patient Advocates; and Dr. Hae-Kyong Park, Geriatric Medicine Primary Care provider. Also, Dr. Italo Biaggioni, Autonomic Dysfunction Clinic, Vanderbilt Med. Ctr, Nashville, Tenn., and Dr. Frank M. Skidmore, Neurology, Movement Disorder Clinic, Gainesville VA Hospital.

Dear Mr. Farley,

My wife and I have been caregivers for I.H. for over 30 years. He passed away this summer at the Tampa VA Nursing Home. For the past six years, I.H. has lived at the Nursing Home. His health improved after he came there. He took his meds regularly, ate a better diet, and was actively involved daily in activities he absolutely loved being a part of.

I wanted to say THANK YOU for the fine care that Dr. Claudia Beghe and the staff on Floor C at the Nursing Home gave to him. We visited him weekly and more often, when possible. Everyone was so very kind to us and I.H.

THANK YOU for what your facility does to make life for the men and women who have had their lives altered permanently in an effort to preserve our freedom.

- J.C.

Dear I.C.U. Staff,

Bless all of your happy, smiling faces! We thank you with all our hearts for the wonderful care and attention you gave my husband. What a great bunch of people! We thank God for each one of you. Thank you Very, VERY much for the excellent care and attention.

- P.B.

Dear Mr. Farley,

Thank you for the very nice letter of condolence upon the death of my father. I want you to know how much my family and I appreciate the excellent care that he received while in the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital. The staff in the Spinal Cord Unit (D) was fantastic. From Dr. Cecille Pope to everyone in the ward, they took wonderful care of Dad—and we are so grateful. I believe he could not have had better care in any hospital any where. It was very reassuring to us that he was well cared for since we all live a great distance from Tampa.

I was told that the Tampa VA hospital is the busiest in the VA system, and I assume there are times when the hospital comes under some criticism. I want you to know how fortunate we feel that there was such a professional and competent facility available for Dad. From what I've seen, there is no place better equipped to care for spinal cord patients nor staff who is as well trained and caring as what you offer at James A. Haley.

- C.S.

Aug. 11, 2006

Congressman Mike Bilirakis  
10330 North Dale Mabry  
The Promenade  
Suite 205  
Tampa, FL 33618

Dear Congressman Bilirakis,

Please accept my sincere thanks for hosting the Appreciation Dinner recently for the Polytrauma team at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa. Everyone had a wonderful, memorable time, and the recognition was especially important to our Polytrauma team members who work so hard each and every day to improve the quality of life for our returning Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen who have been seriously injured.

The entry in the Congressional Record on July 27, 2006 was especially meaningful to all concerned as a sincere reflection of the tireless work and dedication of our staff to our active duty patients.

Poignant and touching, this gesture is truly appreciated by our entire team and meant more to us than you will ever know.

Thanks again.

Forest Farley, Jr., Director  
James A. Haley Hospital & Clinics



# Tampa N.H.C.U. is a 'Home with a HEART'



*Patients at the James A. Haley Nursing Home in Tampa play a modified casino dice game that increases their dexterity and range of motion, helps reinforce math skills, and is a lot of fun (no money is exchanged). It's one of many innovative inpatient and alternative programs for veterans at the NHCU.*

The Nursing Home Care Unit (NHCU) at the James A. Haley Veterans Hospital (JAHVH) meets the needs of aging vets head-on with innovative inpatient and alternative programs tailored to meet the individual requirements of every eligible veteran. The Nursing Home is located adjacent to the VA hospital in its own building. It has 146 active beds on three floors, a Geriatric Primary Care Clinic, and more than 160 talented, dedicated staff including nurses, social workers, dietitians, a pharmacist, a psychologist, and occupational, recreational and creative arts' therapists.

"Most patients come to us from the hospital for rehabilitation," according to Dr. Joseph. "Our goal is to get them better and get them home again." Nursing Home rehabilitation services focus on

comprehensive occupational, speech and recreation therapy. Recreational patient off-site outings include trips to sporting events, bowling alleys, malls, fishing trips, and much more.

**"When people think of a Nursing Home, they think people come here to die... they don't. They come here to LIVE,"**

*- Dr. Inez Joseph, Chief, Nursing Home Care Unit*

veterans must have a service-connected disability of 70 percent or more. These veterans are considered first for NHCU residency.

"We have patients as young as age 20 well into their 90s. Our oldest patient so far--a firefighter--was 104," Dr. Joseph said.

But not all care is provided at the NHCU. Eligible veterans can receive a wide variety of home and community-based care alternatives based on their particular needs. Home care referrals are made by the NHCU's interdisciplinary team for skilled nursing, physical, speech and/or occupational therapy, home health aid, and medical social services. Community Health Nurse Coordinators and Social Workers work closely with non-VA nursing homes, matching where veterans live with their institutional long term care needs. The goal: to restore and/or improve veterans' health, maintain their independence, or provide them with comfort-oriented, end-of-life support services like hospice care.

Meanwhile, on site, the NHCU's Outpatient Geriatric Clinic offers veterans age 60 to 90 comprehensive and coordinated Primary Care services. Dr. Joseph calls "One-Stop Shopping" to meet their complex needs. "The patient never moves—we bring the entire treatment team to him. The patient gets everything he needs—from assessment to diagnostics to team consultation to treatment—all in his exam room. Everything we do revolves around the patient."

Dr. Joseph said the concept for the Geriatric Outpatient Clinic began in 1997 because older patients were missing appointments. "Often veterans were confused on where to go for different things, and rather than face that, they Shopping approach changed all that. Now, the patients are happier and are doing the things they need to do to maintain their health," she said.



**"The list of programs and activities at the Nursing Home is lengthy, and life is, well, pretty darn fun."**



*The Tampa Nursing Home's Patient Bell Choir rehearses under the direction of Cheryl Cotton, NHCU's board-certified music therapist.*

Darlene Davis, NHCU Assistant Chief, said many patients are chronically ill with heart disease, diabetes, kidney problems, and in some, dementia. They are not sick enough to be hospitalized, but require the skilled care of licensed nurses and other staff. "For inpatients, we're trying to make the Nursing Home as much like home as possible," Davis said. "All our patients dress in their own clothes—no ugly hospital gowns here. We encourage them to eat at least one meal in the Dining Room so they can socialize with others and there's always something going on for them to participate in."

## NHCU Leadership

*Keeping Nursing Home operations running smoothly are Dr. Inez Joseph, Chief, NHCU (left); Dee Mercer, Secretary (center); and Darlene Davis, Assistant Chief, NHCU.*



# Making Life Better for

# America's Veterans



*('Home with a Heart' continued)*

During the week, the NHCU "Current Events" program is held in the morning where patients sip their freshly brewed coffee, watch the news on a giant screen t.v., and browse through the local newspapers. Movies are shown weekly and there's Dog Racing on the big screen t.v. Veterans who "bet" and win get coupon books for the Tampa VA's Canteen.

"Happy Hour" happens every Friday at 2 p.m. with live entertainment—Karaoke singers, Red Hat Ladies, community theatre and school performance groups—plus lots of food and nonalcoholic beverages donated by the Nutrition and Food Service and the American Legion.

And speaking of food, special theme meals are prepared quarterly for patients and their caregivers, and are delivered by delighted nurses and other staff. "One summer theme dinner was titled "Hollywood Hot, Hot, Hot!" Patients and staff dressed up as movie stars and Grammy winners and the unit with the best costumes won a unit-wide Pizza Party," Davis said.

Family Council meetings are usually held right after the theme meals. This is the caregivers' opportunity to offer suggestions and ask important questions of NHCU administration regarding the facility's policies and procedures, staffing and other patient care issues. Patients also have the opportunity for input at monthly Resident Council meetings.



*Betty Harvey (right) and Doris Robinson "Mix It Up" in Betty's Kitchen," a monthly program they created where VA Volunteers, working closely with NHCU Dietitians, prepare the special kinds of foods patients request - and love.*

Once a month, "Betty's Kitchen" opens for business at the Nursing Home, according to Dr. Joseph. "VA volunteers, working closely with our dietitians, prepare specific patient food requests....things our kitchen doesn't normally make like corned bread and black-eyed peas. The patients just love it," she said.

The Nursing Home also has its own hand bell choir and percussion musical group that serve dually as music therapy and a performance group, according to Cheryl Cotton, the NHCU's board-certified music therapist.

In addition, a new program, Cotton initiated last year combines music and kinesiotherapy (KT)—scientifically-based exercises that enhance patients' strength, endurance, and mobility.

During a rehabilitation session, the Music Therapist goes into a busy KT gym and sings, plays guitar, and encourages patients who are working out. With the music, patients don't focus on the exercise or how painful the exercises might be. Rather, they focus on the music, and as a result, they do better, according to Cotton. "Patients work harder, exercise longer and have better range of motion when these therapies join together," she said.

New programs are on the horizon and renovation of portions of the NHCU damaged by hurricanes is among the improvements planned, according to Dr. Joseph. Together, she and her dedicated staff are making life better every for America's veterans, honoring the nation's commitment to support them throughout their lifetime.



# Gold Star Program

## Rewards are GREAT for Those Going “Above & Beyond”

*Are you an employee new to the VA?  
Are you a patient, family member or friend of a  
veteran cared for at the Tampa VA Hospital?  
If so, and you’ve observed someone who has  
gone that “extra mile” to help a “customer” –  
a patient, family member, a volunteer or a  
fellow employee – then you need to know about the  
Gold Star Program.*

The Gold Star Reward and Recognition Program at the James A. Haley Veterans’ Hospital and Clinics (JAHVH) awards Gold Stars to recognize JAHVH employees who go above and beyond to give excellent customer service. The program has awarded more than 18,000 Gold Stars since it began in 1999. In 2001, the program won a VA Best Practice award and has influenced other hospitals to implement similar employee recognition programs.

Besides the personal satisfaction and recognition, there are tangible rewards to receiving a Gold Star. These range from a free beverage at the VA Canteen to free meals, gift certificates and gift cards, savings bonds, and even paid time off.

So how does an employee earn a Gold Star? First, nominations can be made by employees, patients and visitors in one of two ways. Just pick up a Gold Star nomination card from one of the more than 30 Gold Star displays all around the hospital. When you’re finished filling out the card, just drop it in the display box.

Hospital employees can submit nominations electronically through the facility’s Intranet Web Site. Just go to the hospital’s Intranet Homepage, scroll down and select “Programs and Activities,” then select Gold Star Nomination Submission and follow the directions.

It’s that easy.

It’s important to point out that good customer service—respect, courtesy, doing one’s job—is expected of every employee. That’s why some nominations will earn an Honorable Mention only. It’s “going beyond what’s expected” that earns a Gold Star.

Recipients at each Gold Star level are posted on the hospital’s Intranet Homepage. To date, the program has honored three 50 Gold Star winners: Registered Nurses Gerald Carlineo and Susan Fesler and Physician Assistant Angel Rivera. The RNs work on 2CN—a busy rehabilitation floor—and PA Rivera works in Surgery. They are also featured on the Wall of Fame for Excellence in Customer Service that is located in the main lobby of the hospital.

The people making the selections are part of the Gold Star Committee, a sub-committee of the hospital’s Customer Service Council. The nine-person committee meets every two weeks to perform the difficult task of determining which nominations meet Gold Star criteria. The group is chaired by Michele Shumsky, Nutrition and Food Service.

“Submissions are not judged on how well a person writes, length, or grammar,” explains Shumsky. “Some of the most humble submissions have met the criteria. What’s important is to jot down examples of exactly how the employee went that extra mile.”

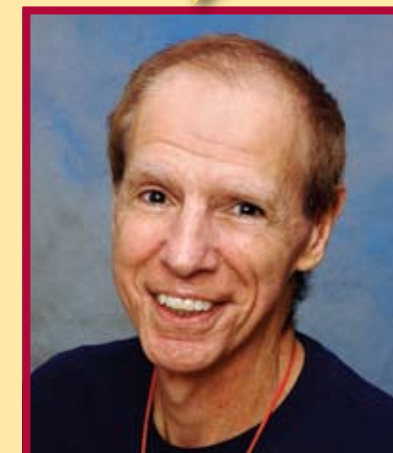
## GOLD STAR Awards & Rewards

5 Stars	Free beverage coupon from Canteen (up to \$1.20)
10 Stars	One week reserved parking space, free meal coupon from Canteen (up to \$5) and “10 Star” Pin
15 Stars	Choice of \$15 gift certificate from Canteen Store or one week reserved parking space
20 Stars	Choice of \$25 Target gift card or \$25 Wal-Mart gift card or \$50 savings bond or 2 weeks reserved parking space and a Customer Service Gold Star Pin
30 Stars	Framed Gold Star Certificate
40 Stars	Framed Gold Star Certificate & 4 hours of Authorized Absence (coordinated with supervisor)
50 Stars	Free beverage coupon, Free meal coupon, \$15 Gift Certificate to Canteen Retail Store, one week reserved parking, \$25 Gift Card to either Target/Wal-mart OR \$50 Savings Bond, 8 hours of Authorized Absence (coordinated with supervisor), \$100 VISA Gift Card Employee picture will be featured on the Customer Service Wall of Fame in the hospital’s main lobby.

## 50 Gold Star Winners



Angel Rivera  
Physician Assistant



Gerald Carlineo  
Registered Nurse



Susan Fesler  
Registered Nurse



# Spotlight on Employees

## ORLANDO BECOMES STAND ALONE VAMC; NEW DIRECTOR NAMED

VA Secretary R. James Nicholson has appointed Timothy Liezert as Director for the VA Medical Center in Orlando, Florida. The Orlando facility officially became its own stand-alone VAMC on Oct. 1 with responsibility for the Viera Outpatient Clinic and the Sanford and Kissimmee Community Based Outpatient clinics transferring from Tampa to Orlando.

Liezert, who started his new job in Orlando in August, came from New York where served as Acting Director/Associate Medical Center Director at the VA Western New York Healthcare System. Before this appointment,

he was Acting Director at the Lebanon Pennsylvania VA Medical Center and also served as Associate Director at the Lebanon and Battle Creek Michigan VA Medical Centers.

Liezert began his VA career in 1987 as an Engineering Co-operative student at the Cleveland Ohio VA Medical Center and worked in Engineering and Facilities Management positions at the Indianapolis Indiana, Castle Point New York and Battle Creek Michigan VA Medical Centers.

He received his undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Akron. He later received



his Masters of Business Administration degree from Western Michigan University. Liezert is a Diplomat of the American College of Healthcare Executives.

## HOSPITAL PAO RECEIVES TOP VA LEADERSHIP AWARD



The hospital's Public Affairs Officer has been named the VA's national winner of the Public Affairs Professional Leadership Award.

Carolyn Clark received the top Public Affairs award in the 2006 Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Excellence in Public Affairs Awards competition. Clark—who has been the PAO at JAHVH since

1995—competed against entries from 16 VA networks across the country.

Clark's award was for leadership in the hospital's internal and external communication. Her initiatives included keeping employees and stakeholders fully informed on Veterans Health Administration, VISN and Medical Center issues; promoting two-way communication among all levels of JAHVH; presenting timely information to Congressional Liaisons and Veteran Service Organizations; enhancing the hospital's public image through printed materials; improving management communication and execution of special events; and promoting positive relationships with key stakeholders by taking all opportunities to tell the hospital's story, with a specific focus on publicizing the Tampa VA's Polytrauma Rehabilitation program.

"I am very pleased for Ms. Clark. She has worked very, very hard over the years, and is extremely deserving

of this prestigious, national honor," said Forest Farley, Jr., hospital director.

Clark holds a B.S. degree in Recreation Therapy from the University of Florida and did graduate studies in Social Work at Barry College. She is a 22-year VA employee who began her career in 1984 at the Miami VA Hospital as a Recreation Therapist.

She has also worked at VA hospitals in Gainesville, Buffalo and Chicago in positions and areas including Recreation Therapist, In-Patient Psychiatry, Chief of Voluntary Service, and Public Affairs Officer.

She received her award in August during the VA's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs National Training Conference in St. Louis.

# NEWS BRIEFS

## Tampa VA Director Accepts 'Banana Bread for the Troops'

Hospital Director Forest Farley, Jr. accepts a box of delicious banana bread for severely injured soldiers and other military being treated at the Tampa VA Hospital.

The bread was donated by Albert Davis, aka the "Banana Bread Man" at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Fla., on Sept. 22nd during U.S. Central Command's organizational and family picnic. Injured active duty service members and their families, hospital leadership, Recreation Therapy and Polytrauma staff from JAHVH all attended the picnic. The Tampa VA group was invited to the event by CENTCOM Command Chief Master Sergeant Curtis L. Brownhill.



## America for Heroes Donates \$5K to Polytrauma Program

The America for Heroes organization made a \$5,000 donation to JAHVH's Polytrauma program during a visit to the hospital on July 19.

The organization is a relatively new non-profit group created to help severely wounded and disabled military personnel, veterans and their families. The group is comprised of retired federal managers with a long history of service to veterans. During the visit, members of America for Heroes met with Tampa VA Hospital Director Forest Farley, Jr. (center) and visited with polytrauma patients and their families.



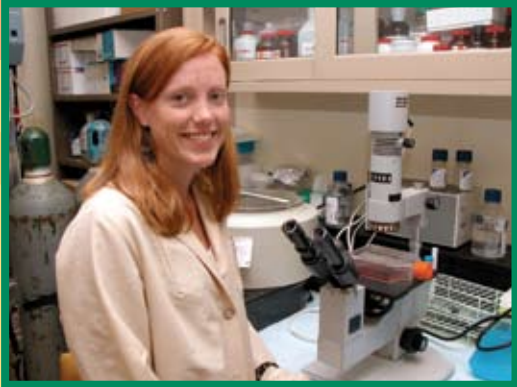
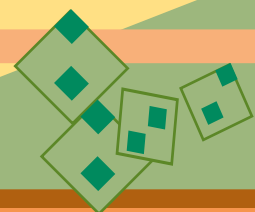
## RN Ericka Lewis Wins National Nursing Informatics Award

Registered Nurse Ericka Lewis is the winner of the Sharon Coleman Nursing Informatics Award for her poster "Return to Relevancy: Nursing Plan of Care integration into the Computerized Patient Records System (CPRS)." A Clinical Informatics nurse, Ericka's work combines technology and human resources to better meet patient needs. The objectives of her poster were to simplify the documentation of nursing care plans for inpatients; design the nursing care plan to be interdisciplinary; and to integrate the nursing care plan to CPRS. The poster was presented during the 2006 Veterans Health Administration eHealth University held in Nashville, Tenn., August 22 to 24.





# NEWS BRIEFS



## BusinessWeek: VA gives 'Best Medical Care in U.S.'

Want to find out who's providing "The Best Medical Care in the U.S."? Then read an article with that title in the July 17, 2006 Business Week magazine. The article chronicles VA's successful decade quest for quality that transformed VA health care. The article discusses VA's state-of-the-art electronic patient medical records, rigorous quality measurement and focus on maintaining patients' health as well as curing illnesses.

## Injured Soldier Receives Rollx Van

U.S. Army SSG Lee Jones received a disabled accessible van at the Tampa VA Aug. 1 from Rollx Vans as part of the Minnesota Company's "Wounded Warrior" program. The Rollx program provides injured soldiers and marines with modified vans that are delivered, insured and maintained by Rollx Vans at no cost to the recipient for six months or longer. Jones, who was injured in Iraq in 2005, is undergoing rehabilitation at the Tampa VA Hospital.



## FDA Approves New Shingles Vaccine; VA Doc Co-led Study

A new Shingles vaccine designed to reduce the risk of the painful nerve and skin condition

was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in May. Tampa VA physician and researcher Dr. John Toney coauthored the landmark Shingles Study that began in 1998 and involved nearly 39,000 people aged 60 and older at 22 VA facilities across the nation, including 1,200 people at JAHVH. The study showed the Merck & Co., Inc. vaccine, called "Zostavax" prevented about half the cases of the infection that can cause chronic pain.

## Devil Rays Visit Patients at Tampa VA



Members of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays professional baseball team visited the bedsides of veterans and injured active duty military members at the Tampa VA hospital on June 23rd. The Devil Rays were joined by Disabled American Veterans (DAV) representatives who are using footage they took from the bedside visits as part of a national DAV promotional video. Besides players and coaches, the Devil Rays were represented by legendary baseball player and coach Don Zimmer (center), a Special Advisor to the baseball team.